

704th Soldier aims 'fore' greatness

By Stephanie J. Santos

Fort Meade SoundOFF!

For Spc. Patrick Hawthorne, golf is a passion. It is not merely a Saturday afternoon pastime, but a sport that involves mental preparation and concise motion. It brings forth a desire to always play at the top of his game. It is this drive that led him to compete in the All Army Golf Trials, and later make the All Army Golf Team.

"You want to go out to the course and have fun, but you also need to have a set goal and stay focused," says the Headquarters Headquarters Company, 704th Military Intelligence Brigade Soldier. "If you really and truly want to be good, you have to eat, sleep and breathe it (golf). You have to make it a part of your lifestyle," he said.

And for as long as Hawthorne can remember, golf has always been an integral part of his lifestyle. He recalls his father taking him out to play golf every weekend and most week nights. While most of his peers were out getting into mischief, for him, there was no question as to how his time would be spent - on the golf course.

But his dedication to the sport paid off. Hawthorne went on to win state championships in high school and was awarded a four-year scholarship to St. Louis University. After college, he went on to join the U.S. Army and before long he was back on the golf course again, only this time at Fort Meade.

So how did this Trenton, Ill. native get selected for one of the most prestigious competitions in the military?

While carrying a handicap of even par or better, Hawthorne said he first compiled a resume based on past tournament experience at Fort Meade and other military installations. He listed his golf scores, handicap and profile achievements. Also included were letters of recommendation. Once everything was submitted to officials in Alexandria, Va., the 26-year-old Soldier says there was only one thing left to do ... wait.

After three months of suspense, Hawthorne received word in October that he had indeed been selected to compete in the All Army Golf Trials - a four-day

competition in Fort Jackson, S.C. " I was mentally prepared to compete in the trials, and I knew that if I played well that I was going to make the team," he said.

Upon arrival at Fort Jackson, Hawthorne, along with 20 other players, went through nearly three consecutive days of familiarizing themselves with the course and practicing before the actual competition.

When the official 72-hole tournament began, Hawthorne was ready, and his scores reflected it; with a score of 72 in the first round, 75 in the second round, 78 in the third round, and 71, in the 4th and final round. Thus, giving him a coveted third place slot, and becoming one of five other players to make the All Army Golf Team.

Hawthorne said that putting himself in the correct frame of mind, prior to the trials is what led him to victory. "You have to be on top of your game.

Your mind has to work perfectly with your body. When I stepped up to tee, I was already thinking about how I was going to win," he said.

Friends and colleagues who know Hawthorne's game were not at all surprised by his selection. "He is the first Army person that I've seen in awhile to make it this far in the competition," said Fred Heuvel, director of The Courses at Fort Meade. "He's a very good player ... not a whole lot of errors. He is consistent and focused."

Although he was excited about making the All Army Golf Team, Hawthorne said he cannot take all of the credit, and thanked his military command and his wife, Jenelle, for her endless support.

"It was Jenelle who got me back into the game. I had taken a break from golf, but my competitive nature was starting to come out at home," he said.

"She basically told me it was time to get back on the course."

After being officially inducted into the All Army Golf Team, and participating in an awards ceremony at Fort Jackson, things moved quickly, according to Hawthorne. In a matter of hours team members were headed off to the next competition-The Interservice Golf Tournament, held in Millington, Tenn.

However, this time around, the competition fared differently. Hawthorne said he did not feel that same adrenaline rush that he felt during All Army Golf Trials. "I did not have the same focus ... I did not play as well as I know I can. The ball just would not go in the hole," said Hawthorne.

His scores during this tournament granted him 8th place, just missing the chance to make it to the All World Military Golf Tournament by one position.

But, we have not seen the last swing from this avid player who describes himself as getting "instantly energized" when it comes to golf.

With continued support from his command, Hawthorne already has his sights set on competing in next year's All Army Golf Trials and hopes to qualify for the U.S. Amateur, the largest amateur tournament in the world.

"I didn't know what to expect in the competition this time around," he said.

"I am going to reassess my goals and make new ones. I hope to come back next year and make a name for myself in the Maryland and Washington, D.C. area."